

Underemployment and underutilisation: Introducing the 'u-series'

Headcount and hours-based measures of labour underutilisation covering underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force

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Background

The ABS has produced aggregate measures of time-related labour underutilisation beyond the unemployment rate since 2001 (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6296.0>). These measures, particularly around underemployment, are based on historical international standards. Data related to insufficient work, and people who are outside the labour force (hence not unemployed) but would like a job, have been collected in the labour supplementary surveys since the 1970s (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6220.0Nov%201975>).

In [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#), the ABS publishes headline underemployment and labour force underutilisation (underemployed plus unemployed) estimates based on these historical standards. In addition, since 2014, ABS has published an 'expanded' underemployed series which expands the 'headline' underemployment measure to include all part-time and full-time underemployed. An 'extended' series is also released annually in [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/latest-release\)](#), which extends the measurement of underutilisation beyond the labour force by including a group of people with 'marginal attachment' to the labour force.

After reviewing our existing underlying concepts and measures of underutilisation, the ABS has developed a new and more contemporary and conceptually coherent framework for underutilisation statistics. Within this new framework, the ABS will produce a more comprehensive suite of underutilisation measures termed the 'u-series'.

The u-series will provide a more frequent, integrated and coherent set of underutilisation measures, in a single release, which collectively cover underutilisation amongst the employed, the labour force and the potential labour

force. The u-series will support and build upon existing measures of employment and unemployment.

This article provides:

- a description of the updated framework and range of u-series measures
- preliminary u-series data – for the period July 2014 to December 2025
- a summary of the differences between the u-series and current underutilisation measures
- information on future output and implementation plans

The u-series will be progressively implemented using a staged-approach to assist with the transition. More detail on this staged implementation is provided in the [U-series outputs and implementation plans \(/articles/underemployment-and-underutilisation-introducing-u-series#u-series-outputs-and-implementation-plans\)](#) section of this article.

The initial monthly release of u-series data (from 2014 onwards) will commence from July 2026, as a companion release to the headline estimates published in [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#). The u-series will be fully implemented in mid-2027 (including extending the time series back to 1978). Until fully implemented, the underemployment information currently published in [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release#underemployment\)](#) will remain the official headline underemployment information.

Underutilisation framework: u-series measures and series

The updated framework for conceptualising time-related underutilisation continues to be founded on the principle of measuring spare labour capacity (un- or under-used labour supply), while updating the conceptual treatments and data series produced (and including groups that contribute to unused labour capacity but have previously not been within scope).

The framework is based on a consistent set of conceptual criteria across all labour force status groups and job search activity and availability. It aims to provide flexibility in analysing broader or narrower views of underutilisation systematically and consistently to suit a greater range of analysis of differing aspects of labour underutilisation.

Conceptual groupings of underutilisation

The updated framework comprises four conceptual groupings. These are:

- Underemployment – employed people who prefer to work more hours than usual and are available to work more hours than usual
- Reduced employment – employed people who worked fewer hours than usual due to economic (involuntary) reasons
- Unemployed and Jobless – people who are not employed, but would like to work and are available to work
- Underutilisation – an aggregation of the above measures

Four-level conceptual hierarchy

The framework introduces a new four-level conceptual hierarchy allowing for the application of different definitions/criteria and enabling consistent comparison across groups.

From narrowest to broadest the levels are categorised as:

- Level 1: Available last week and actively looked in the last 4 weeks (equivalent to the definition to be classified as [Unemployed \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/jan-2026#glossary\)](#).)
- Level 2: Available within 4 weeks and looked in the last 4 weeks (including either '[active](#)' or '[passive](#)' job search steps)

- Level 3: Available last week (regardless if looked)
- Level 4: Available within 4 weeks (regardless if looked)

U-series measures

The complete series is provided below. Each grouping and series has been given an alphanumeric code for ease of use. For example, UD-1 represents a series of the underemployed measure with level 1 criteria.

Underemployed (UD – prefers and available for more hours than usual)

- UD-1: Prefers and actively looked for more hours, available last week
- UD-2: Prefers and looked (active or passive) for more hours, available within 4 weeks
- UD-3: Prefers more hours, available last week (regardless if looked)
- UD-4: Prefers more hours, available within 4 weeks (regardless if looked)

Reduced employment – (RE – reduced hours or stood down)

- RE-0: Stood down (worked zero hours) due to economic reasons
- RE-1: Stood down or had their hours reduced due to economic reasons

Unemployed and Jobless (UN – people who want to work)

- UN-1: Actively looked for work and available last week (Unemployed)
- UN-2: Looked for work (active or passive) and available within 4 weeks (Jobseekers)
- UN-3: Want to work, available last week (regardless if looked for work)
- UN-4: Want to work, available within 4 weeks (regardless if looked for work)

Underutilisation (UU – underutilised, the aggregation of UD, RE and UN)

- UU-1: Actively looked for work for more hours, and available last week
- UU-2: Actively or passively looked for work or for more hours and available within 4 weeks
- UU-3: Available for a job or for more hours last week, (regardless if looked for work or for more hours)
- UU-4: Available for a job or for more hours within 4 weeks (regardless if looked for work or for more hours)

UN-1 reflects the headline unemployment estimates and unemployment rate published in [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release). UN-2, UN-3 and UN-4 extend the criteria of job search activity and availability to cover jobless people who want to work.

UD-1 is the measure of underemployment that is conceptually consistent with unemployment.

The following diagrams illustrate how the updated framework organises underutilised people into the UD, RE, and UN series based on job search activity and availability. At a given level, these are aggregated to form the equivalent level in the UU series.

Employed		Wanted to work more hours			Did not want to work more hours
		Available last week	Available within 4 weeks	Not available within 4 weeks	
Reduced Employment	Stood down (RE-0)	RE-1			
	Reduced hours				
Actively looking		UD-1			
Passively looking					
Not looking		UD-3	UD-4		

Not Employed		Wanted to work			Did not want to work
		Available last week	Available within 4 weeks	Not available within 4 weeks	
Has a job to start or return to	Starts in 4 weeks or more	UN-1	UN-2		
	Starts within 4 weeks				
Actively looking					
Passively looking					
Not looking		UN-3	UN-4		

Preliminary u-series data

A set of preliminary estimates are provided below. The data presented here is subject to change, including improvements to the compilation and backcasting method, to support plans to extend u-series data back as far as reasonably possible.

Series under the first level of the conceptual hierarchy will be the 'headline' u-series measures of labour underutilisation:

- Prefers and actively looked for more hours, available last week (UD-1) – which will ultimately become the new 'headline' Underemployment rate
- Stood down or had their hours reduced due to economic reasons (RE-1) – the new 'headline' u-series Reduced employment rate
- Actively looked for work and available last week (Unemployed) (UN-1) – the existing 'headline' u-series Unemployment rate
- Actively looked for work or for more hours, and available last week (UU-1, the sum of UD-1, RE-1 and UN-1) – which will ultimately become the new 'headline' Underutilisation rate

Charts 1 to 4 show preliminary seasonally adjusted data for the four level 1 headline series – on both a headcount and hours basis, and as levels and rates – for the period July 2014 to December 2025.

Chart 1 shows that in December 2025 there were 355,000 employed people who worked reduced hours for economic reasons, and 430,000 employed people who were underemployed (that is, they prefer, were available and actively looked for more hours). There were 61,000 people who worked less hours than usual in the reference week but also preferred more hours than usual (so are included in both the UD and RE estimates), so the total number of underutilised employed people in December 2025 was 725,000. There were also 630,000 unemployed people. Total underutilisation was around 1.36 million people.

Chart 1: u-series headline level estimates (Seasonally adjusted)

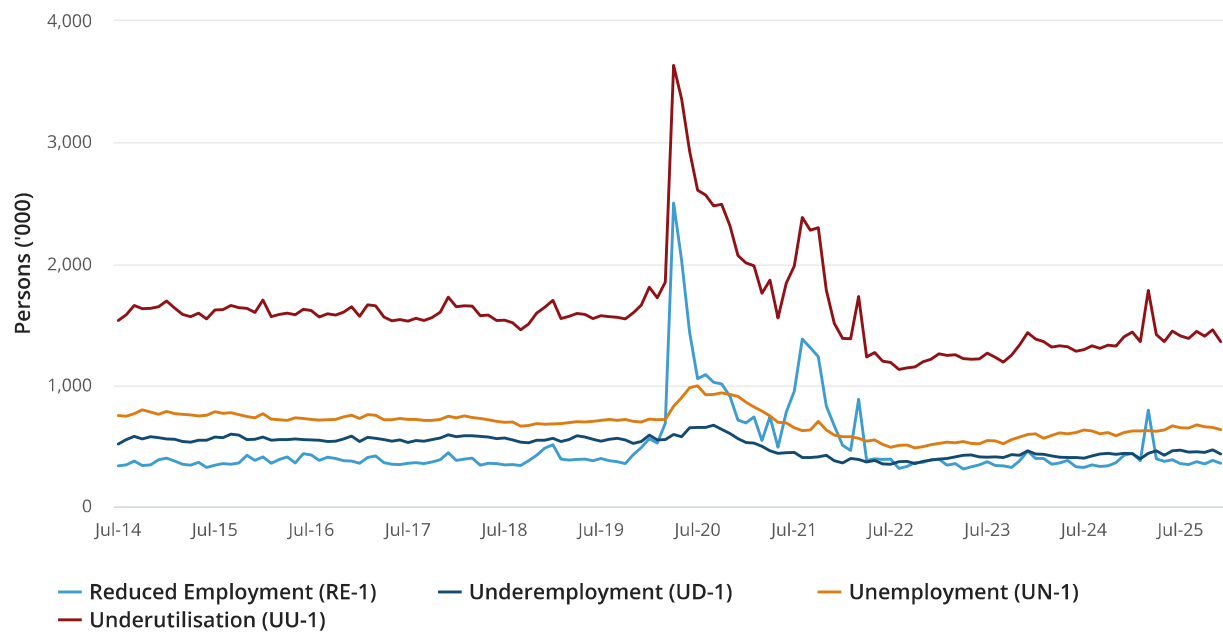
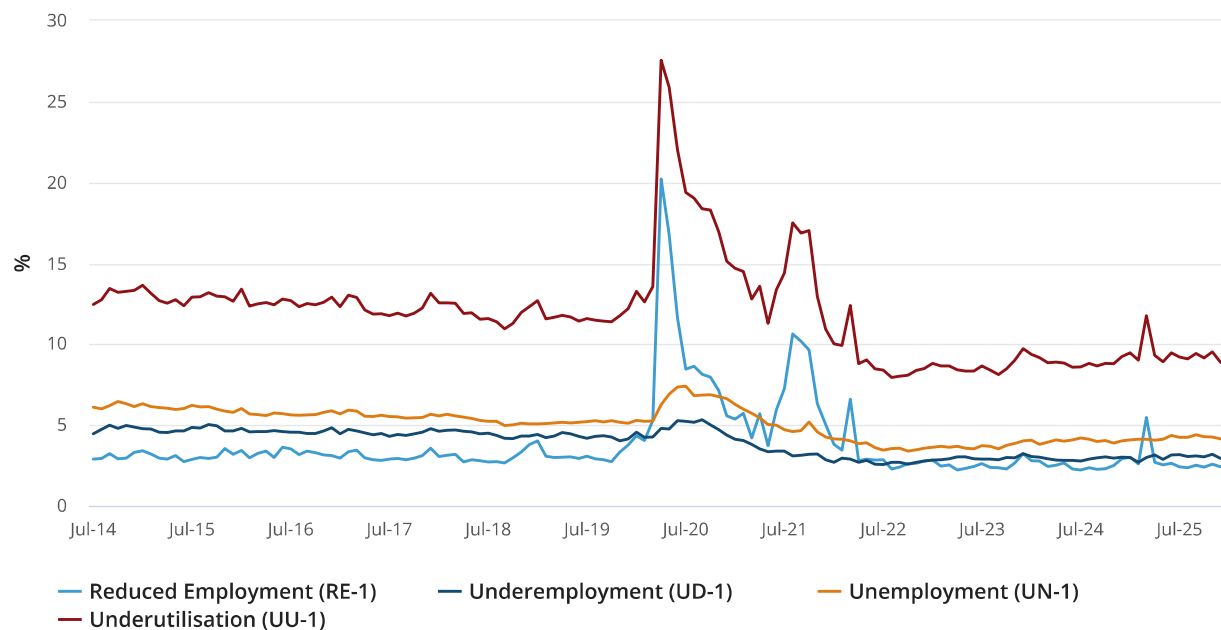


Chart 2 shows that the reduced employment rate (the proportion of employed who worked reduced hours for economic reasons) in December 2025 was 2.4%, and the u-series underemployment rate (the proportion of employed who prefer, were available and looked for more hours) was 2.9%. The combined underutilisation amongst the employed population was 4.9% (the sum of the components does not equal the total as there are people who are simultaneously working less hours than usual and prefer more hours than usual).

This compares to an unemployment rate in December 2025 of 4.1%. The total u-series labour force underutilisation rate was 8.9%.

Chart 2: u-series headline rates (Seasonally adjusted)



Charts 3 and 4 provide volume, or hours-based, estimates of the key u-series groups, showing the total number of 'hours not worked' by underutilised people. In December 2025 there were just over 27 million hours of available but unused labour supply, which results in volume rates of reduced employment of 0.7%, underemployment (1.0%), unemployment (3.4%) and labour force underutilisation (5.0%).

Chart 3: u-series headline volume (hours-based level) level estimates (Seasonally adjusted)

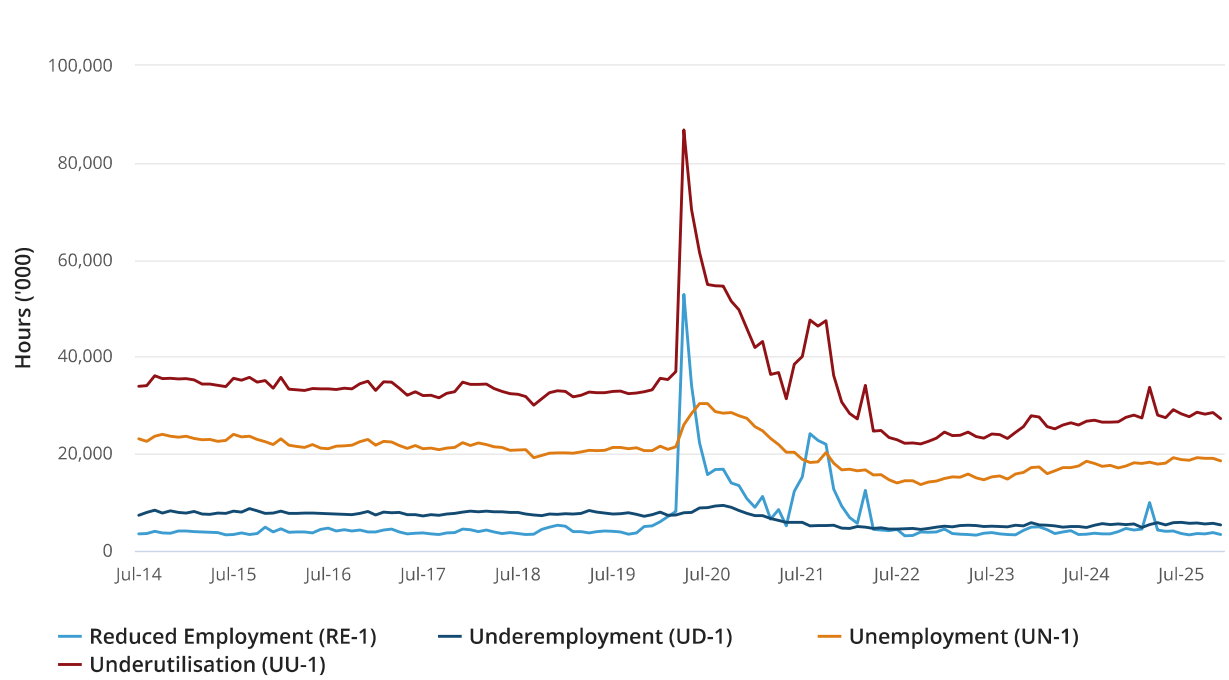
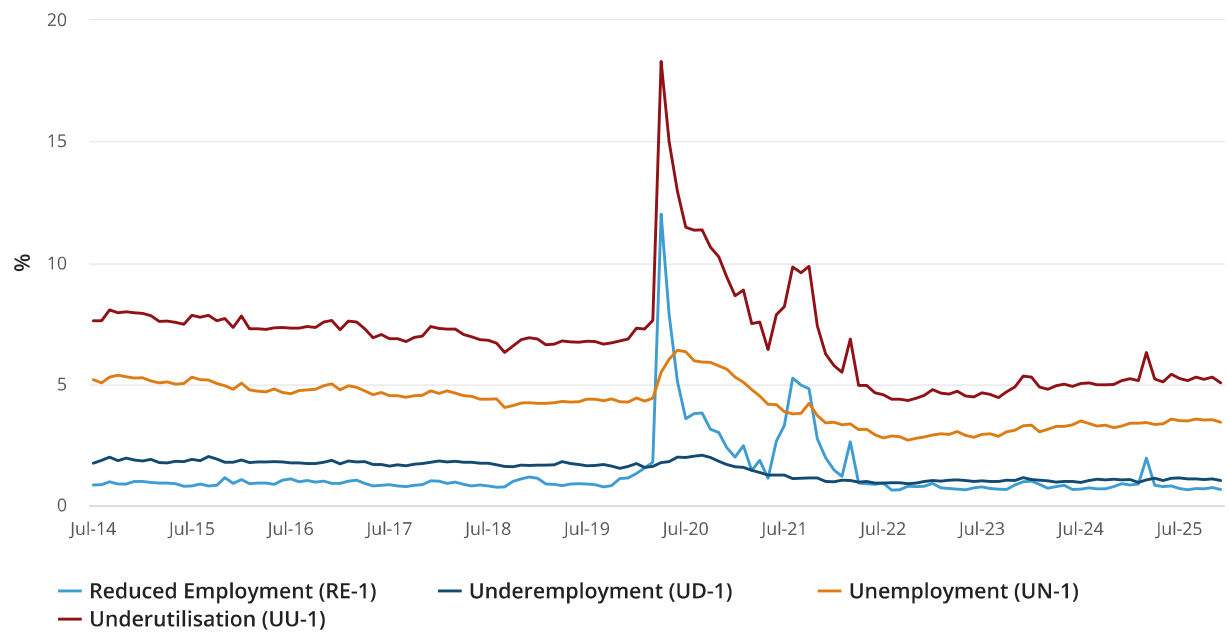


Chart 4: u-series headline volume (hours-based) rates (Seasonally adjusted)



The following sections include preliminary data for all levels of the u-series, for underemployment, reduced employment, unemployment and joblessness, and total underutilisation.

Underemployment (UD-series) ⬆

Charts 5 and 6 show the four u-series underemployment rates, for headcounts (people) and volumes (hours). UD-1, which is the headline u-series measure of underemployment is the lowest (at 2.9% for December 2025) as it applies the strictest conceptual criteria (consistent with the unemployment rate).

In comparison to the headline figure of 2.9%, series UD-3 in Chart 5 shows that 7.6% of employed people prefer and are available for more hours in the reference week (although they may not have looked for more hours). Data from the Participation Job Search and Mobility supplementary survey shows that generally only around half of part-time people who prefer more hours looked for more hours.

Relaxing the criteria even further to count employed people who are available in the next 4 weeks rather than just in the reference week (series UD-4) results in a rate of 9.3%.

Chart 5: Underemployment u-series headcount rates (Seasonally adjusted)

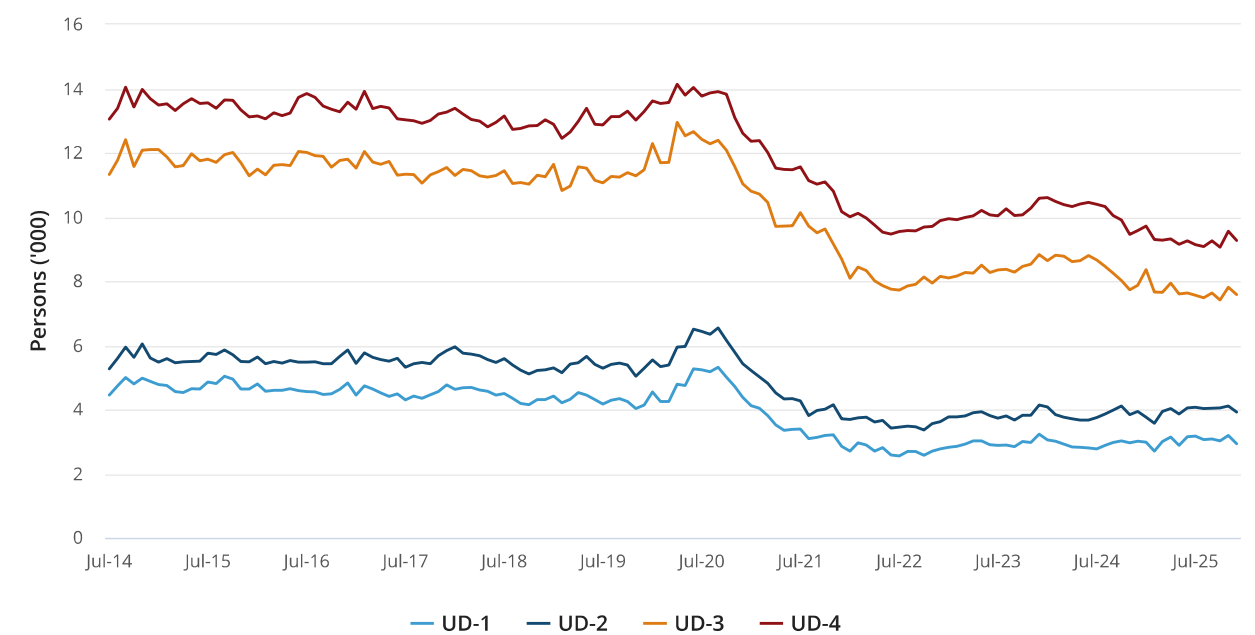
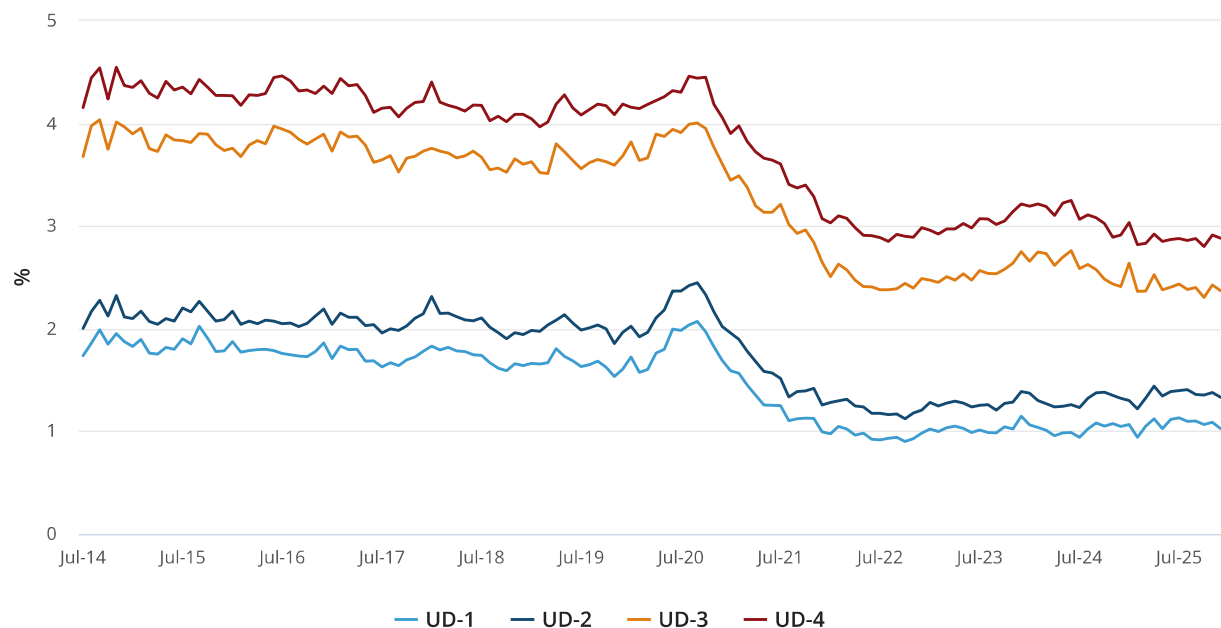


Chart 6: Underemployment u-series volume (hours-based) rates (Seasonally adjusted)

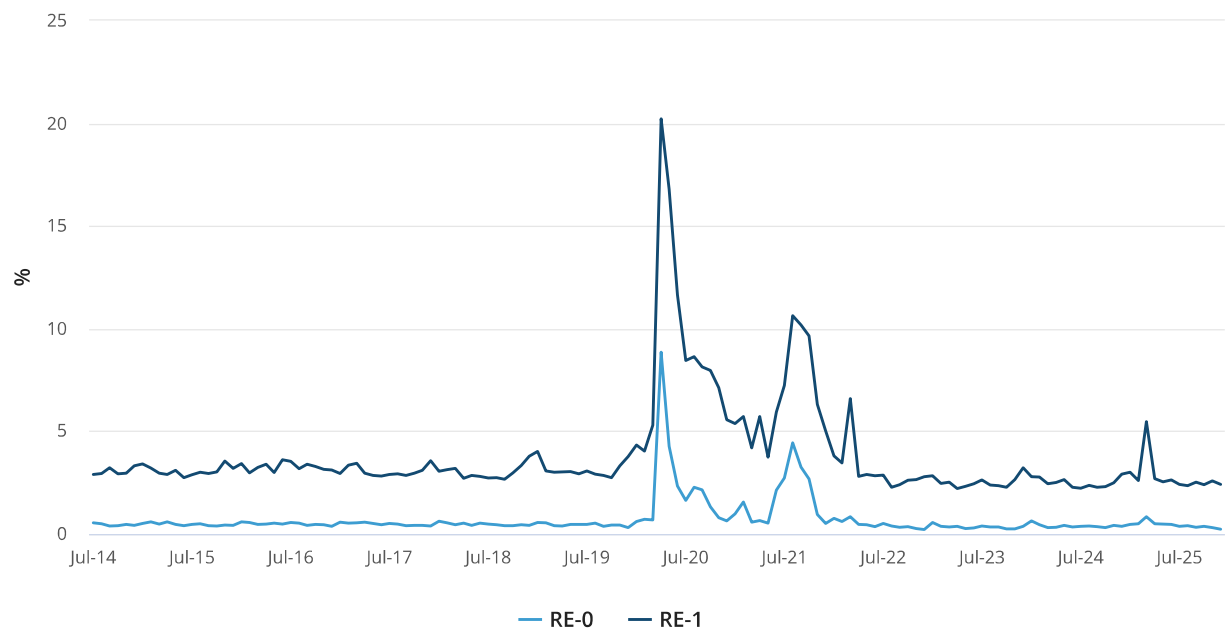


Reduced employment (RE-series)

Charts 7 and 8 show the reduced employment series. The concepts of availability and activity are not relevant to the reduced employment series, as these people have instead had their usual hours temporarily reduced, which is why there isn't the equivalent levels 2, 3 and 4. For the people who have had their hours reduced involuntarily, it is assumed that they would have worked the hours otherwise.

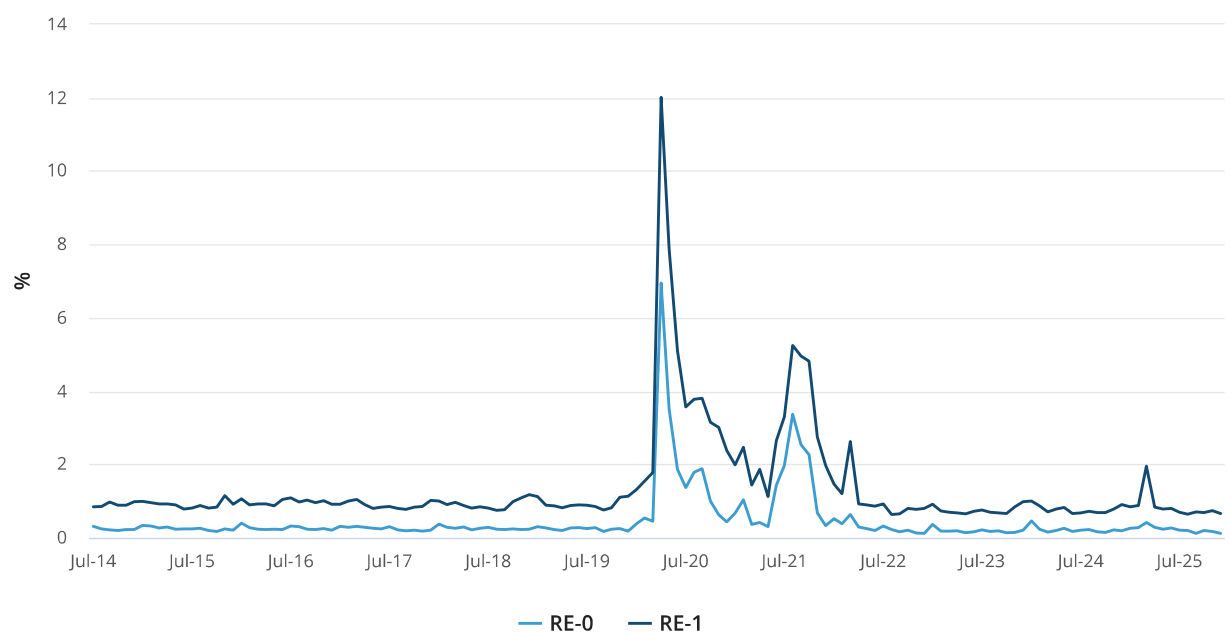
The reduced employment series has a Level 0, which is the subset of people who worked zero hours during the reference week, rather than working some reduced hours during the week.

Chart 7: Reduced employment u-series headcount rates (a)



(a) RE-0 is not seasonally adjusted and only available as an original series. RE-1 is seasonally adjusted.

Chart 8: Reduced employment u-series volume (hours-based) rates (a)



(a) RE-0 is not seasonally adjusted and only available as an original series. RE-1 is seasonally adjusted.

Unemployed and Jobless (UN-series)



Charts 9 and 10 show the u-series rates for unemployment and jobless (on a headcount and volume basis), providing an alternate view of joblessness beyond unemployment and the labour force.

Chart 9 shows, in addition to the unemployed (UN-1) which is people who actively looked for work and were available in the reference week, the people:

- who did any job search activity (regardless of whether it is defined as 'active' job search) and were available for a job in the next 4 weeks (UN-2)
- who want to work and were available last week (regardless if they looked for work) (UN-3)
- who want to work and were available within the next 4 weeks (regardless if they looked for work) (UN-4)

These measures provide an increasingly broad view of joblessness and available labour supply. In December 2025, the unemployment rate (UN-1) was 4.1%. In comparison, the UN-2 rate was 5.4%, the UN-3 rate was 6.6% and the UN-4 rate was 8.1%.

Chart 9: Unemployed and jobless u-series headcount rates (Seasonally adjusted)

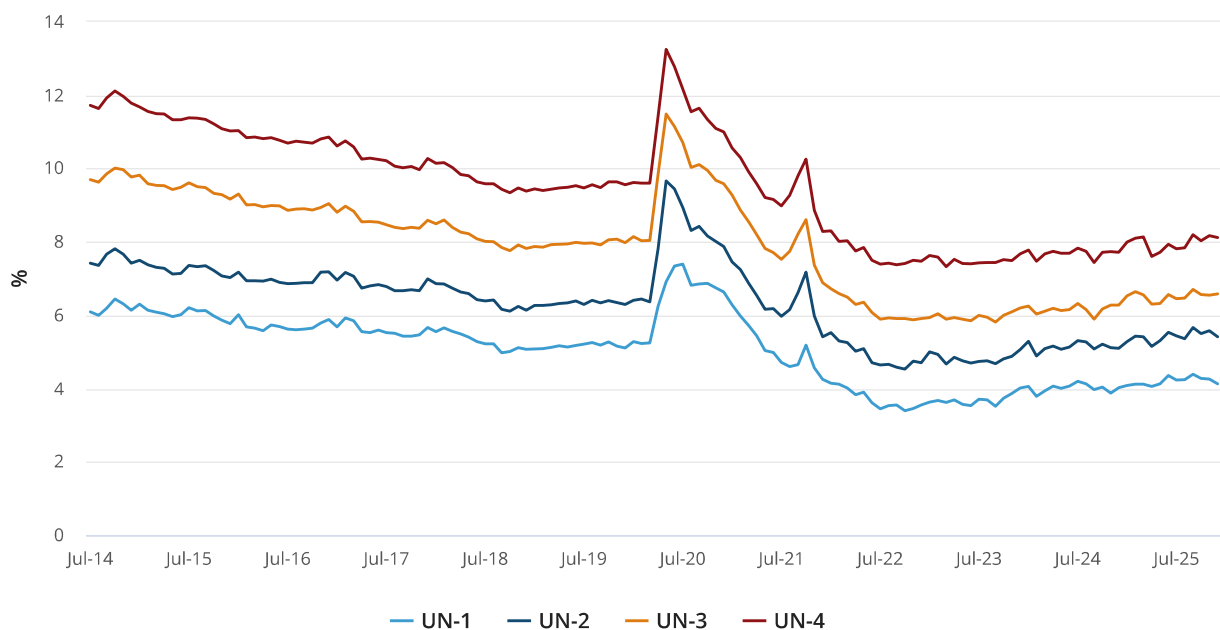
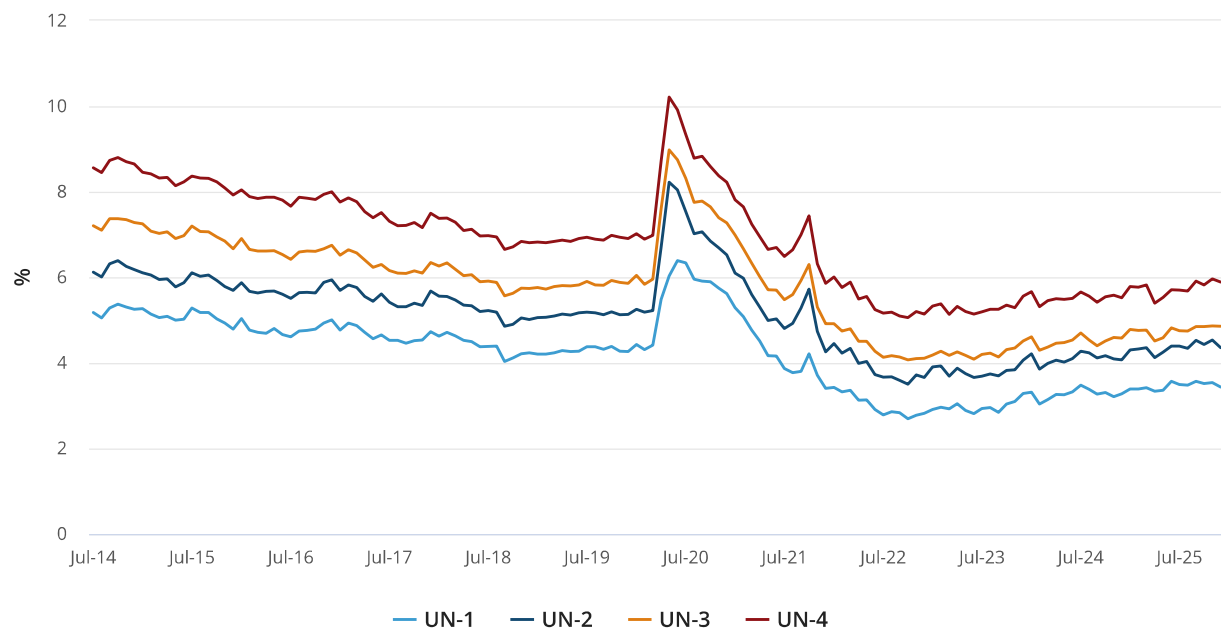


Chart 10: Unemployed and jobless u-series volume (hours-based) rates (Seasonally adjusted)



Underutilisation (UU-series)



Charts 11 and 12 combine the underemployed, reduced employment and unemployed and jobless groups to provide an overall view of labour underutilisation. They show that in December 2025, according to the broadest view of labour underutilisation, the extended labour force underutilisation rate was 18.0% (and 9.2% in volume terms).

Chart 11: Underutilisation u-series headcount rates (Seasonally adjusted)

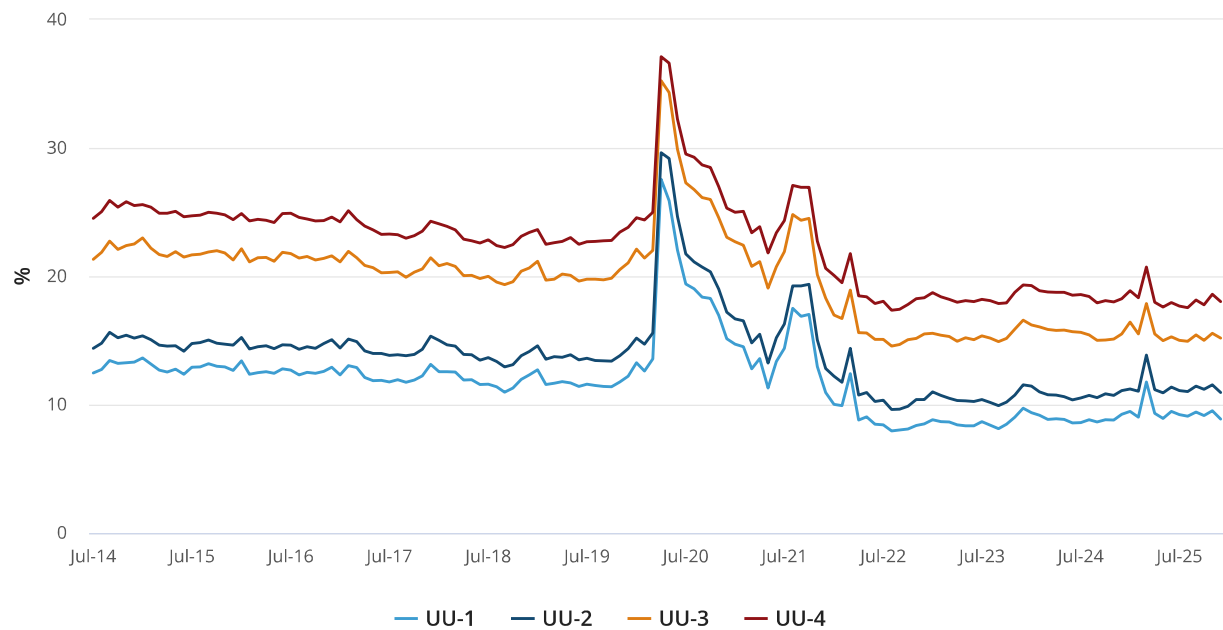
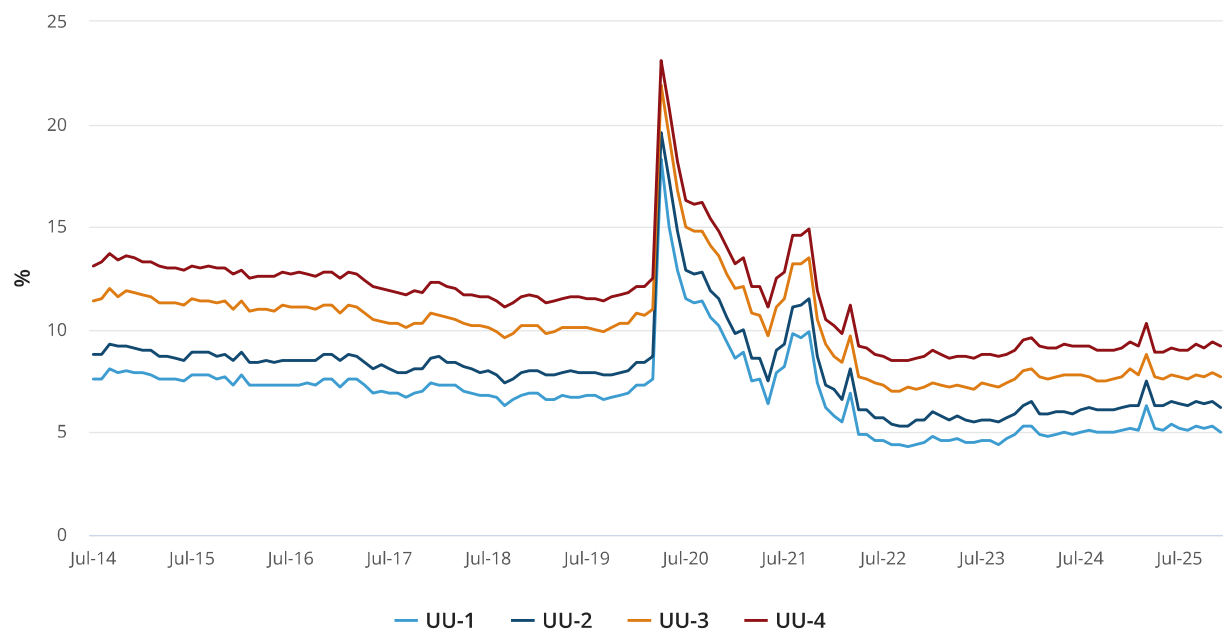


Chart 12: Underutilisation u-series volume (hours-based) rates (Seasonally adjusted)



The spreadsheets below include preliminary level estimates and associated rates for each measure in the u-series in original, seasonally adjusted and trend terms for the period July 2014 to December 2025.

- Underutilisation by State and Territory and Sex
- Underutilisation by Age and Sex
- Volume measures (hours-based) of Underutilisation by State and Territory and Sex
- Volume measures (hours-based) of Underutilisation by Age and Sex

While preliminary seasonally adjusted and trend data are included here, note that standard Labour Force Survey time-series adjustments (including applying trend breaks, where applicable) have not yet been applied.

Underutilisation Tables

Table U1. Underutilisation by State and Territory (U-series)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[6.87 MB]

Table U2. Underutilisation by Age (U-series)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[6.52 MB]

Table U3. Volume Measures of Underutilisation by State and Territory (U-series)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[7.11 MB]

Table U4. Volume Measures of Underutilisation by Age (U-series)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[6.72 MB]

How the u-series are derived

The u-series are compiled using a combination of directly collected information from the Labour Force Survey (for data from 2024 onwards), and Labour Force Survey data supplemented by information from [Participation, Job Search and Mobility \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia/feb-2025\)](#) (PJSM) and [Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release\)](#) (B&I). This supplementary information is used to backcast estimates prior to 2024 to enable comparable measures of underutilisation across a long time series, and account for changes in questionnaires over time.

LFS questionnaire and changes to support u-series

The LFS questionnaire has been updated over time to improve the collection of underutilisation information. The LFS questionnaire, as well as historical versions of the questionnaire that capture any changes, are available in [Labour Force, Australia methodology \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2026\)](#).

In 2014, the monthly LFS questionnaire added additional questions on the preference and availability of people to work additional hours and asked all people who worked fewer than their usual hours the reason. These questions were previously asked quarterly and applied to a subset of those who worked part-time. Further, a question asking hours of work sought by people looking for work and a question asking additional hours preferred by underemployed people were also added to enable volume-based measures of underutilisation.

In 2024, further changes were made to the LFS questionnaire to enable direct measurement of all u-series components. These changes included additional questions on activities in the last four weeks to obtain more hours

of work, desire for a paid job of any kind, and how many hours a week a person would like to work. These questions were previously asked in the PJSM survey.

Backcasting

As all data required for u-series has not been collected across the entire period u-series data will be produced for, data for periods prior to 2024 will be backcast. The backcasting method is broadly consistent with the method used to backcast other series in the Labour Force Survey, and aligns with changes in the collection of underutilisation information across the different ABS labour surveys. Using supplementary data from the Participation Job Search and Mobility Survey, as well as Barriers and Incentives, enables the formation of a single, continuous u-series.

The table below provides an overview of the backcasting method used for each series for the 2014 to 2024 period. Additional adjustments will be required as the series is extended prior to 2014.

Code	Definition	2024-26	Backcasting method
			2014-2024
RE-1	Worked less than usual hours for economic or involuntary reasons	Directly measured	Directly measured (a)
UD-1	Actively looking for more hours and available last week	Directly measured	As a subset UD-3, where actively looking for work is estimated based on proportions observed in PJSM and B&I (b)
UD-2	Looking for more hours and available in 4 weeks	Directly measured	As a subset UD-4, where looking for work is estimated based on proportions observed in PJSM and B&I (b)
UD-3	Available last week	Directly measured	Directly measured
UD-4	Available in 4 weeks	Directly measured	Directly measured
UN-1	Actively looking for work and available last week	Directly measured	Directly measured
UN-2	Looking for work and available in 4 weeks	Directly measured	Based on UN-1 plus additional populations 'passively looking for work' and 'not looking for work'. These populations are directly measured in total, with their desire to work and availability to work estimated based on proportions observed in PJSM and B&I (b)
UN-3	Available last week	Directly measured	
UN-4	Available in 4 weeks	Directly measured	

a. Additional populations were estimated to be involuntary away from work during 2020-21 due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

b. PJSM refers to the Participation, Job Search and Mobility Survey and B&I refers to the Barriers and Incentives Survey.

More detailed methodology on the compilation and backcasting method will be included alongside the full release of the u-series data.

Differences between u-series and current measures

There are a range of key differences between the u-series measures and the existing labour underutilisation measures. These include:

Underemployment and reduced employment

- Current headline underemployment measures combine those employed people who worked reduced hours involuntarily and those who prefer more hours. These are quite different cohorts, with different series showing different patterns. In the u-series, these two cohorts will be published as two distinct, but aggregatable, measures.
- Current headline underemployment measures are limited with respect to part-time or full-time status. Only full-time employed people who worked less than 35 hours (part-time hours) due to economic reasons and part-time employed people who would prefer and are available to work more hours are included. In the u-series, all employed people who worked less hours than usual for economic reasons and all employed people would prefer and are available for more hours will be included (with full-time/part-time breakdowns available).
- Current headline underemployment is not conceptually consistent with official unemployment statistics as it relates to the definitional criteria. To be unemployed a person needs to have actively looked for work in the last 4

weeks and be available for work in the reference week. In contrast, to be underemployed a person does not need to be looking for more work and only needs to be available in the next 4 weeks (or the reference week). The u-series will provide an underemployment measure which is conceptually consistent with unemployment, as well as broader underemployment measures that relax the activity and/or availability criteria.

- The scope of economic/involuntary reasons for working fewer hours than usual has been broadened slightly (e.g. people who worked fewer hours than usual due to 'bad weather or plant breakdown' are now included).
- The current headline underemployment rate is calculated as the underemployed as a proportion of the labour force. The u-series underemployment rates will be calculated as a proportion of the employed population. This is to ensure the underemployment rate reflects the prevalence of underemployment amongst the group of interest (employed people) and will mean movements in unemployment can not impact the underemployment rate.

Unemployed and jobless

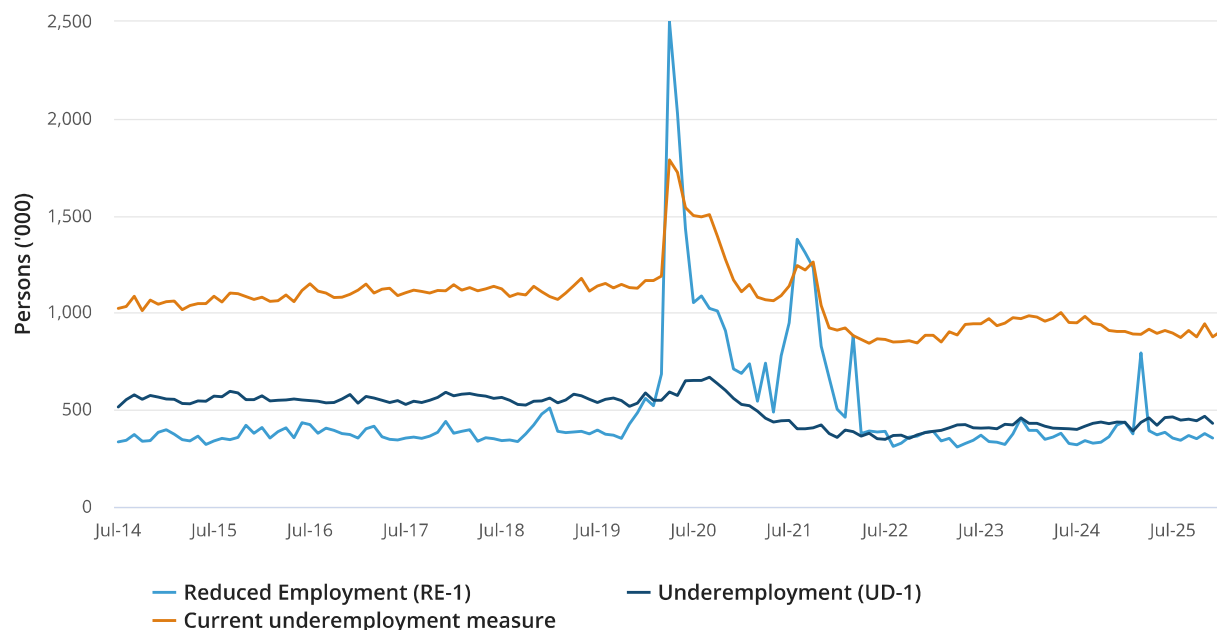
- The current extended underutilisation measure includes those who have a marginal attachment to the labour force. These are defined as people who were not in the labour force, wanted to work and were: actively looking for work but did not meet the availability criteria to be classified as employed (marginally attached); not actively looking for work but were available to start work within 4 weeks (discouraged job seekers); or had a job to start or return regardless of availability or desire to work (job attachment). The u-series excludes people who had a job to start or return to but were not available in 4 weeks, or did not want to work.
- Volume (hours-based) measures of the current extended underutilisation series (i.e. those outside the labour force) are not produced. Volume (hours-based) measures for those outside the labour force will be produced as part of the new u-series.

Comparison of u-series with current underemployment series

A comparison of the new reduced employment and underemployment u-series and the current underemployment measure is shown in Chart 13. This highlights the impact of expanding the scope of underemployment measures to all people working less hours than usual (rather than limiting to full-time employed). This is particularly evident in periods of economic shock such as during the COVID-19 period, where the exclusion of part-time people working fewer hours than usual meant the full extent of COVID lockdowns was understated in the underemployment data, as compared to the RE-1 series which includes all people working fewer hours than usual for (involuntary) economic reasons.

Over the COVID-period, UD-1 shows there was a reduction in the prevalence of people preferring more hours than usual, which was also not evident in the current underemployment measure. This highlights why these series (Underemployment and Reduced employment) are treated as distinct, although related, concepts within the u-series.

Chart 13: u-series vs current underemployment



U-series outputs and implementation plans

U-series outputs

The u-series data will be published on a monthly basis, with headcount and volume measures (levels and rates) available on an original, seasonally adjusted and trend basis (for the period 1978 onwards). It is expected that the u-series will be published in four spreadsheets:

- U-series headcounts (persons), levels and rates, by Full-time/Part-time, 10-year age groups and Sex
- U-series headcounts (persons), levels and rates, by Full-time/Part-time, State and Territory and Sex
- U-series volumes (hours-based), levels and rates, by Full-time/Part-time, 10-year age groups and Sex
- U-series volumes (hours-based), levels and rates, by Full-time/Part-time, State and Territory and Sex

The u-series data will be available alongside the release of [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#). U-series populations will also be available from the [LFS TableBuilder \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/labour-force-survey\)](#) product and [Longitudinal Labour Force Survey microdata \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](#).

The new u-series tables will ultimately replace the following Labour Force Survey underemployment and underutilisation tables:

- Labour Force, Australia – Table 22. Underutilised persons by Age and Sex
- Labour Force, Australia – Table 23. Underutilised persons by State and territory and Sex
- Labour Force, Australia – Table 24. Underutilised persons by Age and Sex (expanded analytical series)
- Labour Force, Australia – Table 25. Underutilised persons by State, Territory and Sex (expanded analytical series)

- Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Table 23a. Volume measures of underutilisation by State, Territory and Sex
- Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Table 23b. Volume measures of underutilisation by Age and Sex

Labour Force, Australia tables 22 and 23, which contain the current headline underemployment information, will continue to be published for a transitional period as part of a staged implementation (discussed below) to support the transition to the new u-series. They will continue to provide the official headline underemployment information until the u-series is fully implemented.

Labour Force, Australia tables 24 and 25 (the expanded underemployment series) will be permanently retired as part of Labour Force Survey output changes resulting from Labour Force Survey modernisation (see [Information paper: Upcoming changes to Labour Force Survey outputs \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/information-papers/upcoming-changes-labour-force-survey-outputs\)](#) for more information). These spreadsheets will be superseded by the u-series.

The release of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed tables 23a and 23b will be temporarily paused as part of the output changes resulting from Labour Force Survey modernisation, and once resumed they will continue to be published for a transitional period as part of the staged implementation.

The u-series will also effectively replace some data published in [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/feb-2025\)](#), which repackages data from the Labour Force Survey expanded underemployment measures. These changes, which will be implemented in the February 2026 issues of Underemployed workers, includes no longer publishing the following:

- Underemployed workers – Table 1. Cyclical and structural underemployment of full-time and part-time workers (and associated graphs and commentary)
- Underemployed workers – Table 2. Extended measures of underutilisation

An accompanying underemployment and underutilisation [labour statistics guide \(/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics\)](#) will be released, and the [Underutilised labour chapter \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/concepts-and-sources/underutilised-labour\)](#) of [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023\)](#) will also be updated to reflect the new u-series once fully implemented. These will provide more detail on the concepts and methods used to derive the u-series, including on the backcasting method and providing advice on understanding and interpreting ABS underutilisation statistics including the u-series.

Implementation plans

There will be a staged implementation approach for the u-series. Key elements of the implementation and output strategy include:

- All four levels of the u-series will be published in a new stand-alone monthly u-series release, commencing on 31 July 2026 with June 2026 data (to coincide with the release of Underemployed workers and Potential workers, for which there will be content changes resulting from the u-series).
- Following the launch of the new u-series, the release will then move to a regular monthly cadence, to be published a week after the main Labour Force Survey release, from the July 2026 reference period onwards (published in August).
- It is expected that data will initially be produced for the period 1997 onwards.
- The u-series will initially be published as a companion release to the Labour Force Survey for a suitable transitional period. The underemployment information currently published in Labour Force, Australia (i.e. in Tables 22 and 23) will remain the official headline underemployment information reported on in Labour Force Survey commentary and the media release.
- In early-2027 it is expected the historical time series will be extended, with data backcast to 1978.

- In mid-2027, the u-series measures will become the official headline estimates of underutilisation.
- u-series level 1 estimates will be published in Labour Force, Australia. The separate u-series release, with all u-series levels, will continue to be published a week after the initial Labour Force Survey release.
- At this time, Tables 22 and 23 in Labour Force, Australia will be permanently retired, and all underutilisation reporting in the Labour Force Survey commentary and the media release will be based on the u-series.
- u-series related data items will be added to the Labour Force Survey TableBuilder file and Longitudinal Labour Force Survey microdata.

There may also be an updated version of this article published in May 2026, with data updated to March 2026. Further detail on outputs and implementation plans will be provided later in 2026.

Further information

If you have any questions on the u-series or would like to provide feedback, please email labour.statistics@abs.gov.au.